

Three Count[®]

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Frey assumes WCW reigns; Rhodes regains control of wrestling product

Turner Broadcasting legal counsel Kip Frey became World Championship Wrestling's new executive vice president last Wednesday, replacing Jim Herd, who resigned after a three-year tenure.

Frey, who served as WCW's legal counsel since last April in licensing and merchandising activities, said he has turned power of the wrestling aspect in the company to Dusty Rhodes. Rhodes assumed the match-making role last February, but was replaced last September by a steering committee consisting of himself, Terry Allen, Jim Herd, Jim Crockett, Jim Barnett and Jim Ross. Rhodes was also the booker when Crockett Promotions went bankrupt in 1988.

"The wrestling aspect rests with Dusty," Frey said. "But I'm going to be involved with this company. It's mine to run."

Like Herd, Frey had no experience in the wrestling business when assuming the vice president role. Frey, 33, is a graduate of USC's film studies program, and earned his law degree from Duke University, where he also taught a class. Frey has also served in private practices in California and North Carolina, and was the legal counsel of the Charlotte Motor Speedway in North Carolina.

"I'm here to make things run," Frey said. "I don't see me not having a lot of experience as a deterrent. I think we are going in a fresh direction."

Herd, the former chief executive officer of Pizza Hut, was highly criticized during his tenure for his lack of knowledge upon entering the wrestling business. Herd reportedly left on bitter terms with WCW after losing a power-play to Rhodes. A WCW source said Herd criticized Rhodes, Allen and Ross openly last Wednesday at a committee meeting, and flew to his hometown of St. Louis the next day.

The appointment of Frey has already brought about wholesale changes in WCW's front office. Crockett, who gained power throughout the fall in determining the company's direction, loses much of his input by being named in charge of the group's event coordinators, replacing Rob Garner. Sharon Sidel, who worked in

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Turner Home Entertainment's pay-per-view division, has moved to the wrestling side of the Turner organization, and will work with Garner and Crockett in pay-per-view planning (Sidel also has no wrestling background). Garner, who many thought was being groomed as Herd's eventual replacement, is now in charge of WCW's syndication package and is a pay-per-view liaison. Barnett now has full control of booking arenas for the group.

Other changes include better relationships with the wrestling media, with Frey returning phone calls from newsletter writers and wrestling columnists. Frey and Rhodes will hold a news conference Jan. 21 in Topeka, Kan., following WCW's Clash of Champions. Highlights of the conference will appear in two issues. Rhodes, who was banned from wrestling and appearing on WCW telecasts by Herd, will return as a commentator within a few weeks, according to one source. Rhodes, who is notorious for self-promotion, will also make himself the center of attention in other WCW wrestling angles, and will be bullroped to manager Paul E. Dangersously in matches in February. Herd's departure has also brought a slew of calls from World Wrestling Federation employees with employment inquiries, and also sparked rumors of the return of manager Jim Cornette, who declined a chance to rejoin WCW last summer because of past disagreements with Herd.

Wrestling insiders, who are already against the appointment of the inexperienced Frey, have wondered how Frey could be named Herd's replacement so quickly after the position opened, especially when viable candidates Bill Watts and Jerry Jarrett were available. The reason, according to a WCW source, is to soothe tension between WCW and other parts of the Turner organization, which were strained when Herd was in charge.

Jim Herd: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Jim Herd's three-year tenure as World Championship Wrestling's executive vice president can be described in many terms, but it was never boring. Here's a synopsis of the legacy Herd left behind, and an analysis of his actions.

The Good

1. WCW's relationship with New Japan Pro Wrestling. While Herd didn't directly set-up this deal, he was largely responsible for making sure it didn't fall through. The result was the first infusion of some of Japan's (and the world's) best wrestlers to a new audience.

2. Herd helped WCW shed its regional image and emerge as a national group, albeit it a minor one when compared to the World Wrestling Federation. This was done through improved production on pay-per-view shows, especially in lighting and special effects, and a predominant lack of Southern-sounding talent on television shows.

3. When Herd had a hand in producing WCW's product, he expressed a willingness to promote matches with an international flavor. He wanted to book legitimate foreign wrestlers for the Starrcade '90 Pat O'Connor Memorial tag-team tournament, and did have a Japanese women's tag-team bout on the Wrestle War '91 pay-per-view show.

4. WCW has a much better television syndication deal in major markets than before Herd arrived, even though the group's syndication base remains the same. WCW was also able to book bigger arenas in 1991 through Herd, but was unable to capitalize.

5. Herd was the first wrestling executive to establish working relationships with the media, even if those were cut-off in mid-1991.

6. Herd insured that talented wrestlers (Brian Pillman, Tom Zenk and The Steiner Brothers in particular) did not get buried by a booker with a large ego. He also insured Japanese talents Jushin Liger and Big Van Vader received pushes.

The Bad

1. Hiring policies toward WCW match-makers. Herd hired George Scott, Dusty Rhodes and Ole Anderson -- neither of whom improved WCW's lot from the steady and rising ratings Ric Flair's regime produced in 1989-90.

2. The loss of top-flight talent. Names like Ricky Steamboat, Terry Funk, Steve Williams, Terry Gordy and Mark "Undertaker" Calous left for no good reason except an unwillingness on Herd's part to negotiate a reasonable agreement.

3. Herd lacked control in almost all of WCW's booker regimes, but it became obvious during crunch time. When WCW was booking by a seven-man committee in 1990, one wrestler was given seven different finishes before his television match. People were also given different directions for off-dates as well.

4. A lack of consistent policy. Memos were the norm at WCW during Herd's regime. One would be issued and usually nullified within one week. Especially poor were the contradictory no-blood, no chair swinging, no media personnel memos that spewed from Herd's corporate office.

5. The double standard. Certain wrestlers don't have to lose (Sting, Lex Luger, The Steiner Brothers) while others get fired if they refuse to (Danny Spivey, The One Man Gang). The same goes for contracts, as Spivey was given more than four chances to return after violating WCW policies which other wrestlers were permanently fired for.

6. The Black Scorpion. How Herd could let that ridiculous storyline continue without knowing a satisfactory conclusion is grounds for firing alone.

The Ugly

1. Herd's constant meddling in booking decisions when he claimed not to be involved in the match-making procedures (thus attempting to avoid the blame).

2. Flair. This was the final nail in Herd's coffin. The contract situation that caused Flair's departure last July was an embarrassment, but not as big as Flair showing up on WWF television with the group's title belt. Herd was also unfair to Flair during the latter's booking regime, causing Flair to resign when TV ratings had reached their zenith.

3. Herd became so paranoid about what wrestling newsletters had to say that a title change between Luger and Flair in 1990 was canceled. Yet Herd freely gave away "inside" information to those same writers.

4. Art Barr. Barr, who wrestled as Beetlejuice, was fired when WCW got word he had pleaded guilty to a rape charge in Oregon. Herd refused to stand by his employee when he promised he would, and looked awfully stupid for not checking out Barr's background (which was well known in wrestling circles).

5. Herd invented some of the stupidest characters wrestling had ever seen. The Ding-Dongs and Oz not only failed to draw money or improved television ratings from children, but made the group look like a second-rate WWF.

6. Robocop. Herd struck a deal landing the computerized policeman as the focal point of the Capital Combat PPV show in May 1990. Robo only showed for 45 seconds, and the gimmick received none of the desired mainstream publicity.

Letters

Dear Alex,

I certainly sympathize with the plight of Superstar Bill Graham and wish him good luck in his quest for steroid damage restitution. I am curious, though, about the basis for his lawsuit and really do not understand it. Of course, he had no idea about the potential effects, but his great body did earn him a lot of money and fame in wrestling. How far reaching does the suit go?

While Billy was WWF champ, he got main event matches in St. Louis against Harley Race, Bob Backlund and Terry Funk. Since Superstar was far from being a Dory Funk Jr., Jack Brisco, Pat O'Connor, Gene Kiniski-type worker, he got his main-event push here from his physique and power. Does this mean the promotion here and those in other areas are also liable for pushing a partially steroid-induced super-physique?

Also, do you know how many newspapers have regular wrestling articles? Do you have any idea how many major markets have wrestling radio shows?

— Harry White, St. Louis.

AM: Says Graham (who has not officially filed suit as of yet): "The basic basis of the lawsuit is with Vince McMahon, the WWF and their long-time conspiracy with Dr. George Zahorian (the Pennsylvania osteopath convicted last July on eight counts of illegal steroid distribution to pro wrestlers) by making all the steroids and other drugs available to me since 1977. That's the basic connection with the WWF — their desire to promote the use of anabolic steroids and the way they made them so readily available.

"As for other promotions, I wouldn't consider anyone else to blame. I don't have the legal expertise as my attorneys do, but I don't think anyone else is liable. But the WWF was providing the drug through Dr. Zahorian. There may be a rebound affect, but I don't think there's any great liability."

As for wrestling columns nationwide, I write a weekly column that runs in *The Miami Herald* every Sunday, *The Boca Raton News* on Mondays, and several dozen other Knight Ridder newspapers, including Spartanburg, S.C. Mike Mooneyham writes a very good syndicated column that appears in Charleston, S.C. and *The Phoenix Sun* among other places. John O'Rourke writes for *The Albuquerque News*, Jim Thompson (a.k.a. M.L. Curry) for *The Detroit News*, Steve Beverly for the *Columbus (Ga.) Ledger*, Mark Nulty in San Antonio and *The Slammer* for *The New York Daily News*. There is also Cliff Ducey at *The Boston Herald*.

As far as radio shows go, the ones I know are Ric Carter's *Wrestle Talk* on KLAV-AM (1230) in Las Vegas, John Arezzi's *Pro Wrestling Spotlight*, Rich Mancuso's

show on WFAN, WBAU-AM in New York on Saturdays, and Mike Tenay's *Wrestling Insiders* show, which is syndicated nationally on the Sports and Entertainment Network from 9-11 p.m. E.S.T. Saturdays. WCW announcer Jim Ross does a show on WSB-AM (750) in Atlanta from 9-10 p.m. Sundays, but after he shilled for six months about his show on WCW air-time, I guess you knew that. I am currently negotiating for a two-hour weekly radio show in Gainesville. Hope to have more details in a couple of weeks.

Speaking of media, expect a lot more stories on Graham in the upcoming weeks. From an insider's standpoint, Nulty and Mooneyham recently interviewed Graham for stories to be printed soon. *The San Diego Tribune* has a huge Graham story coming out February 1 (the day the paper merges with *The San Diego Union*). The paper in Troy, N.Y., has a Graham story appearing Jan. 19 (the day of the Royal Rumble).

Advertisements

John Arezzi of 99 Middle Country Road, Coram, NY 11727 has begun production of the *Pro Wrestling Spotlight* newsletter (he also has a radio show of the same name in New York City). Cost is \$6 for four issues.

Jeff Goldberg of 11628 Tanager Drive, Jacksonville, Fla., 32225, is interested in obtaining tapes of wrestling from England.

Desire any wrestling memorabilia? Interested in video tape of old matches or those from other parts of the country or world? Advertise here for free for subscribers only at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla. 32604-0795. I'm also looking for results and/or analysis of matches from other arts of the country. Please send them to the above address.

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Paul Hanlin Jr. begins next issue as *Three Count's* first weekly columnist. Hanlin, 28, has written for Wade Keller's *Pro Wrestling Torch* and Jeff Mullins' *Pro Wrestling Sushi*, and was also a contributing writer for the official newsletter of the *China Beach* fan club and a staff writer for the official *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* newsletter.

Steroid allegations by Graham, Shults garner attention in *Post* column

The first aftershocks of claims of anabolic steroid use by Hulk Hogan and other World Wrestling Federation performers by two ex-WWF stars were felt last Thursday in a column by the *New York Post's* Phil Mushnick.

Mushnick, who has previously voiced displeasure in the WWF's claims of promoting "wholesome family entertainment," took a number of people to task over claims by "Superstar" Billy Graham and David Shults that Hogan was a long-time steroid user and distributor. Quoting extensively from John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show, which featured Graham and Shults Jan. 5, Mushnick wrote about Shults' claim of injecting Hogan "hundreds of times" with steroids. Shults, who claims to be writing a book, also said WWF owner Vince McMahon asked him to gain weight and increase the size of his arms before a series of title bouts with Hogan in 1984, that the WWF employees convicted felons and a doctor, whose name he would not reveal, would fill a prescription for "50 bottles of testosterone and decadurabolin (two types of anabolic steroids) at one time in a WWF locker room."

WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta said Jan. 13 the group is withholding comment on the article or claims of Hogan's steroid use. Planamenta said he figured the WWF would release a statement at some point about claims by Graham that he was told by the FBI that McMahon had possible connections to the Mafia. Graham said he was approached by Theodore Smith, the U.S. district attorney who prosecuted accused steroid distributor Dr. George T. Zahorian, to either wiretap his phone or wear a wire to help an ongoing FBI investigation about McMahon.

The WWF reportedly did its second anabolic steroid test Jan. 7 at its television taping in Daytona Beach. This test, unlike the first one administered in November, is supposed to result in a six-week suspension for anyone who failed.

Mushnick's article focused largely upon the WWF's impact toward children, a fact he believes is largely ignored by mainstream media because of the WWF's closed-door media policy and because the promotion is "often dismissed as innocent children's theater pitting good characters vs. bad characters; an industry supported by a small, powerless subculture that's neither old enough to vote or spend." Graham, who, along with Shults, said he felt threats to his safety may be made because of their decision to talk about Hogan and ste-

roids, said, "We're dealing with a subject here that could affect millions of dollars worth of merchandising and should justifiably do that, because we have a super hero to these children of the United States, a mega hero, a mega star who has come out and blatantly lied and deceived the kids of this country. I believe if you lie to a child in the magnitude of what Hulk Hogan has, that falls into the category of child abuse."

Mushnick also points out certain areas of the WWF product he feels serve as negative role models to children. Among them, the Jake Roberts-Randy Savage snake bite angle from last November (in which a de venomized cobra gnaws on Savage's arm) and the cover story in McMahon's most recent World Bodybuilding Federation magazine that said "big, muscular guys get all the girls." As background for the story, Mushnick cited discrepancies in Hogan's denial of steroid use last July on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, and the five Federal Express packages Hogan received from Zahorian, who was convicted on eight counts of illegal steroid distribution to pro wrestlers last July.

Graham, an admitted long-time steroid user who claims the drug caused the disintegration of his body's joints, said on Arezzi's show he injected Hogan three times with steroids in 1987 -- at the Silverdome in Pontiac, Mich., at the Cow Palace in San Francisco and at Kiel Auditorium in St. Louis. Graham also claimed Hogan had scar tissue "the size of a tennis ball" on his hip because of daily steroid injections.

Despite the article, the mainstream media has continued to ignore accusations of Hogan's steroid use. *The Regis and Kathy Lee* show on Jan. 10 featured a segment with Hogan from October 1, 1991. *The Miami Herald's* Jan. 12 wrestling column broadly featured some of Shults' claims against Hogan. Hogan has refused comment to the media on the subject.

Mushnick, however, remains optimistic an increasing number of media outlets will delve into the subject.

"I think more and more people are starting to understand the WWF is not harmless child's play that will go away in time or because of true benign neglect," Mushnick told *Three Count*. "These are people selling muscle to kids."

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A special thanks to Three Count reader Art Peluso for providing documents pertaining to this article.

Results

I attended an International Wrestling Federation show Jan. 10 at the Chain of Lakes Civic Center before a legitimate near sell-out crowd of 250. The following is my report:

1. **Bret Blair and The Nuclear Assassin Number One** wrestled to a 10-minute draw. Blair is a former South Florida independent wrestler, and now wrestles as one of the Bad Boys with **Billy Brooks**. The Assassin usually works as an IWF jobber, but he was pretty solid in this match. Both were heels, and the heat (like for most matches throughout the evening) was consistent. Grade: C+.

2. **The Stomper** pinned **Randy Fuller** with two stomps in about 10 minutes. The pinfall was set up by **Nasty Ronnie**, the Stomper's manager, clocking Fuller in the neck with his cane. Fuller has gained about 20 non-steroid helped pounds, and carried the match. Grade: C.

3. **Caribbean Kid Berto** defeated **Brooks** with a cross-body block off the top rope in about 20 minutes. Highlight of this match (and the evening) was one of Berto's fans throwing a chair at Blair, who interfered at one point in the match. The chair hit an old, fat woman in the back of the head, knocking her senseless and nearly causing pandemonium in the building. The fan was ejected thanks to the quick work of IWF legal counsel **Chris Qualmann** (who would not comment on the legal ramifications of the fan's actions). Berto is still green, but he did some nice dropkicks and brings about 40-50 fans to his matches. Grade: C-.

4. **Cliff Anderson** defeated **Randy Rose** by disqualification in an IWF television title match. Rose is good enough to wrestle as a light heavyweight in a larger organization, and Anderson has improved since his days wrestling as **Cliff Sheets** in Fort Lauderdale. Anderson (who does an **Arn Anderson** gimmick) even took a backdrop on the cement floor. Finish came when Rose accidentally clobbered the referee with the **Terry Gordy** clothesline in the corner. Anderson went for a DDT, was small packaged, and Fuller rushed the ring and counted the pinfall. The referee reversed the decision. Grade: B-.

5. In the best match of the night, **Blackjack Mulligan** and **The Long Riders** (**Bret Colt** and **Kip Winchester**) defeated **The Heartbreakers** (WCW jobber "**Powerhouse**" **Tim Parker** and **Big Til**) and "**Possessor**" **Ned Brady** in about 25 minutes of an elimination tag-team match. Mulligan has been released from prison and, contrary to other reports, will wrestle for this group, not manage. Mulligan looked about the same physically, and was much more active in the ring than any time I have seen him since the early 1980s. He was

still slow, but not to the point of embarrassment. Parker pinned Colt first after Heartbreakers manager **Champagne Cain** (who was ordered away from ringside by the referee prior to the match) snuck back and clobbered Colt with an IWF tag-team title belt outside the ring. Brady (who I think is a prime-time worker) was pinned by Mulligan after Parker missed a chair shot. Parker then pinned Winchester after about seven minutes of solid double-teaming by the Heartbreakers, who have a great amount of potential but are unlikely to ever shot it in a major group in this day of steroid-inflated wrestlers. When Parker got up from the pinfall, Mulligan rolled him up for the pin. Mulligan pinned Til to end the match when he missed a clothesline and Mulligan used the infamous roll up for victory. Grade: B.

6. **Mondo Clean** defeated **Al Hardeman** in a lumberjack match to retain the IWF heavyweight title. I didn't stay for the duration of this match, but what I saw was horrible. I figured a two-hour drive home shouldn't be delayed any further by something this bad. Hardeman, though, is from Winter Haven and sells about 40 tickets to the show. I also may have left prematurely, as the finish was well-booked. The finish came when Hardeman was tripped by Anderson while coming off the ropes, leading to the pinfall. After the match, Hardeman had a face off with Anderson when Mulligan hit the ring, leading to a Mulligan-Hardeman vs. Clean-Anderson main event in a steel cage Feb. 21 (The IWF's first-ever cage match).

Notes: I had a really good time, sitting with Qualmann and *Arena Report* scribe **Ron Lemieux**, and can't complain about the card's quality or duration (about three hours). One thing that did disturb me was three wrestlers blading in the six-man tag-team bout. Not only were there no barriers at ringside, but by brawling near the crowd, someone could have gotten blood splattered on them. Lemieux told me his shirt had blood stains on it from IWF's last Winter Haven show. I not only think the practice is outdated and unsafe for health reasons, but unnecessary for a show in front of a small crowd and the amount of money the wrestlers are getting paid ... I think the addition of Mulligan was good one for IWF owner **Eddy Mansfield**, and gives them a name "star" in Florida to draw fans in small towns ... IWF ring announcer **Kevin Kelly**, who also handles the group's TV shows, began the evening by welcoming everyone to the "jam-packed" arena. I hate over-exaggerations. Kelly's voice, though, for all you former and current radio personalities, seemed fine.

The WWF also held a show Jan. 9 at Robarts
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Sunshine State News

Suncoast: Promotion owner Henry Raines is giddy after the most recent Arbitron ratings for November 1991. The 30-minute Suncoast show, which is aired on WBSV-TV (Channel 62) in Sarasota on Saturdays at 8:30 a.m., draws a 1.0 rating. That translates into 17,000 homes, a six percent share of the audience and 13 percent of the male audience. What makes that even more impressive is that World Championship Wrestling's WCW Pro show that follows at 9 a.m. draws well less than a one percent rating. In Nielsen ratings for WTTA-TV (Ch. 38) in Tampa at 5:30 p.m. Saturdays, Suncoast draws a .8 rating (20,000 homes). The WCW Main Event show, which airs opposite the Suncoast show and is available in double the households, draws a 1.6 -- which is basically the same size of audience.

Highlight tapes of past Suncoast shows begin airing this weekend with a loser-leave-Florida match between **Penelope Paradise** and **Debbie Malenko**. Raines said his next taping is tentatively slated for April 11, but that date could be moved forward.

A quick correction from last issue. The **Giant Outlaw** is junior varsity coach at Southeast High, not Southeastern as originally reported. Rumor has it The Outlaw does not wear his mask while coaching.

IWF: Eddy Mansfield's International Wrestling Federation has reached an agreement to appear on Channel America beginning the first week of February 1 (air time uncertain at press time). Channel America is a cable network carried in 106 markets, including Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Tampa ... Mansfield tells Three Count his next television taping will be February 1 at Universal Studios. Give him some credit. Almost all of his original talent has remained, despite weak pay-offs (which isn't Mansfield's fault) and no television tapings for more than four months ... **Kendall Windham** will not be working with this group or the time being. Windham, who was sentenced to three years in a federal prison in 1989 on counterfeiting charges, is currently on a work release program that forces him to return to a half-way house before 9 p.m., which is too early for IWF shows ... Grumbings continue that IWF legal counsel **Chris Qualmann** may promote an independent card May 16 in Jacksonville, the night prior to World Championship Wrestling's **Wrestle War '92** pay-per-view emanating from the same city.

LMLW: Howard Brody's Ladies Major League Wrestling is up-and-running with a three-date tour in six weeks. His show on March 1 at Port St. Lucie High School (a fund-raiser for the school's band) has **Bambi-Wendi Richter vs. Judy Martin-Lelanai Kai** to crown the group's inaugural tag-team champions. Also, **Rockin' Robin vs. Peggy Lee Leather** for the LMLW world title,

Penelope Paradise vs. Allison Royal for the Florida title, **Candi Divine vs. Maliah Hosaka** for the North American title (this is sounding more and more like the belt saturation in the NWA's during the mid-1980s), **Pink Cadillac** in a handicap match and one other bout. Brody also has a show scheduled for Feb. 29 in Immokalee, and likely March 2 at the Fort Lauderdale War Memorial.

Brody's shows come at a time when women's wrestling is at an all-time low world-wide. **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** reported the folding of JPW, the second-largest women's wrestling company in the world. Members of the group, which is based out of Tokyo, are reportedly trying to align themselves with Super World Sports, the Japanese men's promotion that co-promotes shows with the WWF in Japan. Also, it appears that **Tor Berg's Ladies Professional Wrestling Association** has fallen by the wayside. Berg, who had a television taping scheduled Dec. 28 in Panama City, canceled the show at the last minute, but did pay for the hotel stay of some of the talent that flew in. A source close to management in Panama City said the arena received a call from someone claiming to be from LPWA the day of the show. The individual said the show had to be canceled because Berg had died.

Another source said Berg's downfall comes at the hands of **Herb Rossen**, the LPWA's original syndicator. Rossen reportedly won a \$37,000 suit against Berg for breach of contract, but Berg could not make the payment and attempted to stay low key. Rossen is attempting to gain control of the LPWA's tapes, and has sent letters to Berg's television affiliates informing them of the decision.

Brody himself lost a television outlet when **Herb Abrams' Universal Wrestling Federation** was booted off SportsChannel America Jan. 1. Abrams, who had been showing tapes of LMLW from March 1990, was dropped reportedly "because of the lack of quality shows." Abrams will now reportedly work on assembling a syndication package and promote live shows in Pennsylvania, Kansas, California and New York.

WWF: Major news emanating from WWF television taping Jan. 8 in Daytona Beach:

- **Bret Hart** will lose the Intercontinental Title Jan. 19 at the Royal Rumble to **The Mountie**. For those of you new to how the WWF can tape television shows without giving the result away to the live crowd, here's the skinny. Hart came out for his match, and, before the cameras started rolling, The Mountie ran out and stole the title belt. Hart chased him to the back and returned to the ring without the belt. It is supposed to be so subtle that fans don't notice, and except for a few "inside" fans who know better, it does.

- Earning tryouts were **The Latin Fury** (This

was Konan under a mask) and Shaka Chongo (a.k.a. The Soul Taker). Sid Justice (just as large physically) and Rick Martel returned to action (noticeably smaller muscularly), and Chris Walker and Tatonka (Chris Chavis) appeared on television as well.

• Sean Michaels will be paired with Sensational Sherri, as Sherri did a funeral parlor segment drooling over the ex-Rocker. Sort-of makes you think about eventual tag-team bouts between Michaels and Ted DiBiase against Marty Jannetty and a partner. I say Vince McMahon should bring in Ole Anderson for that role, and dub the team "The Rocker and The Rockhead."

Results

(Continued from Page 5)

Arena in Sarasota. Crowd was estimated at about 2,500, which is weak considering the building could hold 4,000 and Ric Flair was on the card. The gate was scaled fairly high as well. Tickets were \$15 and \$12, with a section of bleachers sold as reserved seating. Pre-match highlights included Jerry Brisco hocking styrofoam Jim Duggan 2X4s in the stands.

Match results:

1. Chris Walker d. The Brooklyn Brawler (not good but by the end of the show, it became one of the card's better matches).

2. Sergeant Slaughter d. Colonel Mustafa. This match took the place of The Nasty Boys vs. Duggan-Slaughter, because the Nasties are out of action stemming from an out-of-the-ring scuffle in Peoria, Illinois. Brian Nobbs was stabbed three times in the arm and once in the stomach, but according to WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta, will only miss about three-to-four weeks of action. Jerry Sags was knocked unconscious in the melee after being hit with jumper cables, and sustained a concussion. He is also OK. Irwin R Shyster (Mike Rotunda) was not injured.

3. Repo Man d. Virgil (Virgil made Mulligan's punches look stiff).

4. Bret Hart d. Flair via disqualification in about 20 minutes. Hart had Flair in the sharp shooter (scorpion deathlock), and the referee bent over to check if Flair conceded. Flair then poked the referee in the eye, causing the DQ. The match was very slow and methodical, but was outstanding from a psychological standpoint. The match was announced as the first main event of the evening.

5. Ted DiBiase d. El Matador. Sensational Sherri, who was advertised as appearing, was a no-show, which was not announced to ringside fans; 6. The Mountie d. Greg Valentine; 7. The Legion of Doom d. The Natural Disasters (who looked really big in person). There was tremendous heat for this match, which is

amazing considering what a boring show it was. A lot of fans commented that this wasn't as good a show as WCW's in the same building a few months back.

Notes: The funniest thing on the show came at intermission. There were few, if any, security guards at the matches. So when a group of kids jumped in the ring to horse around, about 50 more followed. So did two teenagers. After everyone jumped around the ring for a little while, Brisco came back with a policeman and the kids scattered. When they had cleared out, the only people left were the teenagers, and that's because one had the other in a figure-four leg-lock. When they realized what had happened, they bowed out gracefully.

Scoop sheet

This new segment is devoted to highlighting what some of the other newsletters around the country are reporting this week, followed by subscription information.

Arena Report (Jan. 13): A full live report from the WWF's Jan. 7 television taping in Daytona Beach; Hot rumors have Hulk Hogan retiring after Wrestlemania VIII (report was unconfirmed), WCW possibly running an outdoor show in Daytona Beach in June, Vince McMahon running his next World Bodybuilding Federation pay-per-view show June 13. P.O. Box 952547, Lake Mary, FL 32795-2547; bi-weekly; cost \$1 an issue.

The Wrestling Observer Newsletter (Jan. 10): A nine-page interview with Superstar Billy Graham highlighting his entire career and newly-released information about Graham's previous drug abuse; A complete synopsis of Phil Mushnick's *New York Post* article discussing alleged steroid abuse by WWF wrestlers; Highlights from the WCW-New Japan joint card held Jan. 4 at the Tokyo Dome. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell, Calif., 95009-1228; weekly; cost \$1.50 an issue.

The Pro Wrestling Torch (Jan. 16): Lead story on Jim Herd's resignation as WCW executive vice president; A Chris Zavis column about "dream" wrestling cards in Japan; Two-page interview with David Shults about steroids and Hogan; Royal Rumble editorial. P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis, MN 55420; weekly; cost \$1.25 an issue.

Pro Wrestling Spotlight Weekly (Jan. 13): Introduction to inaugural issue; one-page interview with Sonny Beach of the Universal Wrestling Federation; Review of the top 10 wrestling videos of 1991; Mat Memories with the Mohammed Ali-Gorilla Monsoon fiasco in 1976. 99 Middle Country Road, Coram, NY 11727; weekly; \$1.50 an issue.

Wrestling Chatterbox (December 1991): Year end review of wrestling news; Xerox copies of newspaper articles on the late Ripper Collins, and *The Miami Herald* and *Boston Herald* wrestling columns; match results. 23-44 30th Drive, Astoria, NY 11102-3252; monthly; \$2.50 an issue.

Editor's note: Yes, the usual delays and snafu's have hit this issue of *Three Count*. I waited until 1/17 for my interview with David Shults, but he did not return my phone calls (no word as to why not). Next issue, if it does not feature Shults, will have an interview with "Nature Boy" Buddy Rodgers, a live report from the 1/16 WCW show in Jacksonville, a look at the Royal Rumble and Paul Hanlin's debut column (among other things). That will be mailed on 1/21. Thank all of you for your patience and kind words.

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